

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of cutting a laminated web structure comprising the steps of:

(a) engaging a first side of the laminated web with a first crack initiator having a high rake angle, the first crack initiator extending from a first cutter base having a low rake angle, the laminated web including at least a support web, and an upper layer, the upper layer being thinner than the support web, the upper layer being located at the first side of the laminated web structure; simultaneously engaging a second side of the laminated web with a second cutter;

(b) generating a first crack in the first side of the laminated web with the first crack initiator completely through the upper layer;

(c) engaging the laminated web with the cutter base of the first cutter; and

(d) further propagating the first crack using the first cutter base while disengaging the first crack initiator of the first cutter.

2. A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising the step of:

propagating the crack through to the second side of the laminated web.

3. A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

(a) generating a second crack in the second side of the web with the second cutter; and

(b) propagating the first crack to intersect with the second crack.

4. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein:
the second cutter includes a second crack initiator.

5. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein:

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the first crack initiator has a height that is greater than a thickness of the upper layer on the first side of the laminated web structure and is at least 5 microns.

6. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein:

the high rake angle of the first crack initiator is in the range of from about 45° to about 70°.

7. A method as recited in claim 6 wherein:

the low rake angle of the first cutter is at least about 15° less the high rake angle of the first crack initiator.

8. A method as recited in claim 4 wherein:

the second crack initiator has a high rake angle in the range of from about 45° to about 70°.

9. A method as recited in claim 6 wherein:

the first crack initiator has a relief angle of not more than about 30°.

10. A method as recited in claim 7 wherein:

the first cutter base has a relief angle of not more than about 30°.

11. A method as recited in claim 3 wherein:

the first crack initiator includes a relief edge that is either straight or curved.

12. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein:

the first cutter base has a rake edge that is either straight or curved.

13. A method as recited in claim 12 wherein:

the first cutter base has a relief edge that is either straight or curved.

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14. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein:

the laminated web structure includes at least one additional layer residing between the support web and the upper layer.

15. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein:

the laminated web structure is an imaging element and the upper layer is a protective layer.

16. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein:

the laminated web structure is an imaging element and the upper layer is a polymeric material.

17. A method as recited in claim 16 wherein:

the polymeric material is coated onto the support web or onto an intermediate layer.

18. A method as recited in claim 16 wherein:

the polymeric material is a separate web laminated onto the support web or onto an intermediate layer.

19. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein:

the upper layer is a laminate is polyethylene, polypropylene, or polystyrene, or a blend thereof, or a copolymer thereof.

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